

**PAX – WITH THE GOSPEL FOR OUR GUIDE
POST-PENTECOST II, 2016.**

September, October, November.

More specifically, this edition of “Pax” spans the period from September 1st until the first Sunday of Advent.

**SECTION ONE: READING AND REFLECTION
Hildegard of Bingen and Benedict of Nursia**

Introduction: This sharing is based on a long Conference I gave some years ago, to Benedictine men and women at a Benedictine Studies Day (part of the annual gathering of Members of the Benedictine Union).

“...that we all really know – even if we don’t admit it – that we are not at home on earth. We know we belong somewhere else and come from somewhere else, and that this knowledge is a primeval memory of something existing outside ourselves.”
(Heinrich Boll)

All of us live off this great memory, and it is not something related to our thoughts or intellect – rather it is something we actually breathe. (Hans Kung)

1. There are depths at which this primeval memory is breathed by humankind...and the greater the depth, the more deeply a human being experiences the irresistible draw to that other being, that outside being. (Being? With a capital “B”) As we age, it is said to become stronger – that is, as family and friends leave us for their eternal and true home. Many Oblates have shared this with me. One person described it as “the pull towards eternity”.
2. This “primeval memory” is at the root of every Christian and monastic commitment. For Hildegard of Bingen, this primeval memory dominated her life in an age when all things temporal were seen in the light of the eternal.
3. Her spirit was alive in that primeval memory which irresistibly drew her to the Divine Godhead. It gave her knowledge born of the Spirit and brought her to total and radical commitment, filling her with apostolic zeal in the Church of the 12th Century. This is manifest in her writings and in her missionary journeys, not to convert pagans, but to re-convert the clergy and the laity, who in many instances were at the mercy of heretics. We see it in the eschatological nature of her monastic liturgy, in her thirst for right living and right conduct, and for Christian and monastic virtues, - especially her deep reverence for the reality of mystery.
4. St. Benedict of Nursia, deeply aware of the “primeval memory” sought refuge in a cave (Subiaco), in order to escape from a corrupt Roman society, a society which at its worst, had no respect for human beings, indulged in material pleasures and placed more confidence in false gods than in the one true God. After Benedict’s experience at Subiaco, he wrote a Rule for Monasteries which would help all those who came after him, to breathe the “fire” of that “primeval memory” and walk the spiritual path that would take his followers home to where they belong.

SECTION TWO: Continuing our Reading and Reflection.

The first Book Hildegard wrote was “Scivias”, (know the ways of the Lord). In Book Two, 5:20, we read: *“The first light of day designates the faithful words of the apostolic teaching; the dawn, the beginning of this [monastic] way of life, which, following that teaching first came about in solitude and in caves (the fathers and mothers of the desert). But the sun symbolizes the separate and well-disposed way I then brought about through my servant Benedict, whom I passed by in a burning fire, teaching him to honour the Incarnation of my Son in the garment of his way of life, and imitate his passion in the abnegation of his will. My servant Benedict, by the Holy Spirit’s inspiration, made the plan of this order a separate and level path...he gathered together large numbers for his order, as my Son, through the sweetness of his fragrance, gathered to himself the Christian people. This Order [the Benedictine Order] rose after the apostles’ preaching as the sun rises after the first light of day.”*

In Book Two, 5:19, God speaks to St. Hildegard about the clothing of the monastic person. Every follower of Jesus is clothed in the garments of salvation. In addition, Benedictine persons (Benedictine monastics) have made a commitment freely, putting on the extra clothes of the Gospel. Their commitment will *“make my Church [on earth] illustrious by the holiness of their lives.”*

St. Hildegard places St. Benedict and the monastic life on a progression of light, an evolution of light, beginning with the early Church (apostles and apostolic teaching). There are the beginnings of monasticism in caves and in solitude – this is the DAWN – carrying on the first teaching, bringing it to greater fulfillment. St. Benedict is the SUN, the foundation of cenobitic monasticism, monasticism which takes “the Gospel for its guide”. (cf. Prologue to the Rule of St. Benedict, and of course, the very title of our Oblate Booklet, from which we take our direction). Cenobitic monasticism is monasticism lived in a community or as part of, a community. This is “our” vocation.

Note the words: Sun, Burning fire, Teaching! The images are of burning, the burning of the Sun (Son), the light of the incarnation. They are images of the purifying of one’s will, purified in the furnace (fire) of the divine love, until there is only ONE will, the will of the monastic person united with the will of God. The teaching is: *“To honour the Incarnation of my Son in the garment of your way of life, and imitate the passion of my Son in the abnegation of your will.”*

A reflection on MONOS: “Monos”, as it appears in the Greek New Testament is the origin of the word monastic. Cf. John 3:16. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life...”

Only Son: The Greek New Testament reads *monogenhs*. The word means “only-begotten, singly existent for the Father, and of the Father, and in the Father.

So, “monos” means singly-existent for God. This is a description of the “monastic person”. The word “monastic” comes from “monos”. St. Therese of Lisieux wrote: “The sun’s light plays on each tiny flower, as if it were the only one in existence.” And it **is** the only one in existence. Each one of us who has made that public commitment to follow Jesus Christ by embracing the way of St. Benedict is an ‘only one’, each a ‘tiny flower’, each purified by the Sun (Son), so that our ‘breathing of the great and primeval memory’ will become clearer and clearer through the years, until

we reach the place where we belong: ‘somewhere else...Someone outside of ourselves’...the great Mystery of the Godhead.”

Monastic Clothing: St. Hildegard receives from God an understanding of “clothing”. The garment of the monastic person is the sign which declares who one is! Whether it is a medallion, a cloak, a cowl, a monastic habit – the declaration is there for all to see. The declaration proclaims that “we are living off the great memory which is something we actually breathe.” (Hans Kung). And needless to say, the declaration will be like “a gong booming or a cymbal clashing” – (that is EMPTY), unless it is accompanied by an expressed “declaration” of Gospel values. St. Hildegard was a reformer of monastic communities, a prophetess, a visionary. She is hard on those who take their vocation with little or no seriousness or fidelity. As long as we keep breathing the “great primeval memory”, we will always take our commitment seriously and remain faithful to the end.

SECTION THREE: ABOUT (CONCERNING) THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT.

In St. Hildegard’s “Scivias”, St. Benedict is compared with Moses. This is a traditional comparison which is found in Benedictine monastic literature. St. Hildegard would have been familiar with this. The personal discipline of both men is stressed. They are God’s leaders, marked by him for exodus: from slavery to freedom. Moses symbolizes the old law, or old covenant. Jesus inaugurates the new law or new covenant. Benedict’s time of personal discipline in the cave at Subiaco represents the old covenant, the preparation for the coming of the Holy Spirit’s inspiration for a plan to found an Order which would live separately from the world and journey on a “level path”. Benedict, in his initial period of purification undergoes the cleansing of the old, to make way for the new. He learned **Wisdom**, in order to moderate the life for his disciples - life “with the Gospel for our guide.” This is the life to which we monastics are called. With monastic hearts we are in the world, and yet not dominated by the values of the world. Our values are Christian values.

SECTION FOUR: COMMUNITY HISTORY

Reading through some of the lives of our early nuns who entered the community against family opposition and peer-group opposition, I am more inspired than ever before at the power of the “great primeval memory” which they have breathed: that they were not really at home on earth – that with passionate hearts, they set out on the Benedictine monastic journey to find their true home. And that is what each one of us has done. We know to the depths of our being that we don’t belong here, and we have set out to find the spiritual path that will lead us home. So, let us pray for one another and thank God for one another, as we journey on together as one vast community. Wherever we are and whoever we are, St. Benedict asks just one question of each of us: “Are you truly seeking God?”

SECTION FIVE: LITURGY

SEPTEMBER:

- 01: St. Giles (Memoria). This day is also the new day introduced by Pope Francis in 2015: A day of prayer in praise of creation.
- 02: Spring Ember Day – day of prayer and penance. (Within Australia).
- 03: St. Gregory the Great Feast.
- 04: 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C.

- 08: Birthday of Our Lady Feast.
- 11: 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C.
- 14: Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Feast.
- 15: Our Lady of Sorrows. Memorial.
- 16: Sts. Cornelius and Cyprian. Memorial.
- 17: St. Hildegard of Bingen. Feast.
- 18: 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C.
- 21: St. Matthew. Feast.
- 23: St. Pius of Pietrelcina. Memorial.
- 24: Mercy Day (Sisters of Mercy)
- 25: 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C.
- 28: St. Lioba. Feast.
- 29: Archangels. Feast.
- 30: St. Jerome. Memorial.

OCTOBER:

- 01: St. Therese of Lisieux: Feast
- 02: 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time.
Guardian Angels. Memoria. This Memoria is omitted in 2016, because the Sunday takes precedence.
- 03: Blessed Columba Marmion. Feast in Benedictine Houses.
- 04: St. Francis of Assisi. Today is also World Pets' Day and Animal Welfare Day.
- 06: St. Bruno. Memorial.
- 07: Our Lady of the Rosary.
- 09: 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time.
Blessed John Henry (Cardinal) Newman. This Memoria is omitted in 2016 because the Sunday takes precedence.
- 10: English Missionary Bishops (from the time of Augustine of Canterbury):
Memorial.
- 12: St. Mechtild von Hackeborn - Feast or Memorial in Benedictine communities.
- 15: St. Teresa of Avila – Memorial.
- 16: 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time.
St. Hedwig, or St. Margaret Mary Alcoque. Optional Memorias. These Memorias are omitted in 2016 because the Sunday takes precedence.
- 17: St. Ignatius of Antioch. Memorial
- 18: St. Luke (Feast)
- 23: 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C.
- 28: Sts. Simon and Jude.
- 30: 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C.

NOVEMBER:

- 01: All Saints. Solemnity.
- 02: Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed (All Souls' Day).
- 04: St. Charles Borromeo (Memorial)
- 05: Commemoration of the Deceased Relatives and Benefactors of our Community.
- 06: 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C.
- 09: Dedication of the Lateran Basilica. Feast. The Lateran Basilica is the official Church of the Pope.
- 10: Pope St. Leo the Great.
- 11: St. Martin of Tours. Feast.

- 12: St. Josaphat (Memorial).
 13: 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C.
 All Saints of the Order of St. Benedict. This Feast is omitted in 2016, because the Sunday takes precedence.
 14: All souls of the Order of St. Benedict.
 15: 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C.
 16: St. Gertrud the Great. Feast.
 17: St. Elizabeth of Hungary (Memorial).
 18: Dedication of the Basilicas of Sts. Peter and Paul. Optional Memorial.
 20: Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. Solemnity. This day takes the Year C readings, and is also the conclusion of the Jubilee Year of Mercy. We need to be aware of this if we are working in Parish Liturgy.
 21: Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is the Annual Feast for all Presentation Sisters. It is also *Pro Orantibus Day*. This day was proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI on November 19, 2006, as the day dedicated to remembering cloistered religious.
 20: **Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.**
Last Sunday of the Church's Liturgical Year.
 22; St. Cecilia (Memorial).

November 27th is The First Sunday of Advent, and the beginning of a new Liturgical Year. The Sunday Cycle is Year A. The Weekday Cycle is Year 1.

SECTION SIX: YOUR COMMUNITY

Congratulations to the Neville Feeny who made his Oblation on August 2nd. Neville was accompanied on this sacred occasion by his wife, Pam, who is also an Oblate of our community. Neville and Pam live in Brisbane. Neville chose the new name of "John", and will celebrate his feast day on December 27th, St. John the Evangelist. Sandra Temple also made a commitment to our Community on August 10th. Sandra was transferring her Oblation from another Monastic Community. Sandra's Oblate Name is "Seraphim" after St. Seraphim of Sarov.

As we read through all the names below – for Anniversaries and Feast Days, may we be aware that all these persons are those who have remembered that they are not really at home on earth, and who are breathing that great memory, - they belong to God, the supreme being, and have chosen the spiritual path presented by that holy man Benedict, who also remembered that he was not at home on earth.

Blessings on your Feast Day:

SEPTEMBER:

- 01: Varcha (Giles) Sidwell, and Jill (Anna) Grienke
 03: Lenka (Gregoria) Hill, and Donn (Gregory) Corcoran, Fr. Brian (Gregory) Mascord.
 06: Wendy (Begu) Fisher-Hudson
 06: Sr. Antonia Curtis
 14: John (of the Cross) Delaforce, Sr. Veronica Chandler, and Sonia (Veronica) Pleines.
 17: Pam (Hildegard) Russell, Linda (Hildegard) Childs-van-Wijk, Patrick (Hildegard) O'Connor, Diane (Hildegard) Young, Beth (Hildegard) Muntz, Robyn

(Hildegard) Wein, Mary (Hildegard) McCall, Elaine (Hildegard) Housen, Louise (Hildegard) McMahan, Anne (Hildegard) Morris Bannerman, Nazin (Hildegard) Atalay, Sr. Hildegard Ryan.

28: Rosie (Lioba) Jenkins, Gerardine (Lioba) Healy, Beppi (Lioba) O'Connor, Kathy (Lioba) Mason, Elizabeth (Lioba) Anderson, Rev. Sharon (Lioba) Baird

29: Sidney (Michael) Rice

OCTOBER:

01: Jan (Therese) Clark, Fiona (Therese) Harris, Libby (Therese) Denny, Sr. Therese Gilmour.

03: Sr. Naomie Ruth Varnakulasingham, Susan (Columba) Lambert.

04: Christine (Frances) Angus, Diane (Frances) Greenway, Rose (Francis) De Angelis

10: Sr. Mellitus Troy.

12: Elaine (Mechtild) Alinta, Sr. Carmel (Mechtild) Leighton, Sr. Mechtild Crawford.

15: Carmen (Teresa) Lorente, Robyn (Teresa) Wynen, Elizabeth (Teresa) Montgomery, Maria (Teresa) Elisabetta Gambino, Beate (Teresa Hildegard) Steller, Ewa Maria (Teresa) Komorowska.

16: Ruth (Hedwig) Huebner, Vincenzo (Gerrado) Cappetta.

25: Wilf (Ambrose) Moon, Ken (Ambrose) Halliday.

NOVEMBER:

16: Mother Mary Gertrud Barnes (Abbess), Mary (Gertrud) Connors, Joan (Gertrud) Dray, Irene (Gertrud) Bajda, Rita (Gertrud) Schembri, Joan (Gertrud) Eldaher, Christine (Gertrud) Phillips, Nereda (Gertrud) Blake, Debi (Gertrud) Russell, Toni (Gertrud) Jenkins, Laura (Gertrud) Moya, Maria Elena (Gertrude) Zaragoza, Christine (Gertrud) Simons, Sr. Gertrud George.

21: Kathryn (Mary) Proctor.

22: Enid (Cecilia) Fleming.

ANNIVERSARIES OF OBLATION:

SEPTEMBER

03: Maree Basel McGuckin.

08: Lyn Hilda Yates.

09: Helen Therese (no surname on the charter of commitment).

14: Fr. Andrew Aidan Doohan.

15: Maria Elena Gertrude Zaragoza, Antonia Bede Zaragoza, Doreen Rita Mary Soballa, Monica Augustina Rodrigues, Geraldine Mary Benedicta Doyle.

16: Dean Bernard Godric Piryak.

22: Elaine Hildegard Housen, and Harry Gregory Housen.

24: Daphne Anne Spelter, Douglas Thomas Fitzpatrick, Brian Barnabas McKinlay, Brenda Joan Payne, Anne Hildegard Morris Bannerman,

26: John of the Cross Delaforce.

29: Chantal Mary Benedicte Jacquier, Debra Benedicta Vermeer, Claire Benedict Lanigan, Judith Magdalen Pickering

30: Lindsay Samuel Alban Roe, and Vivien Teresa Hilda Arnold.

OCTOBER:

05: Diane Frances Greenway

14: Louise Hildegard McMahan.

17: Rev. Dixon Serafim Kenney, Wendy Mary Kenney. Philip Benedict Ryan, Gudrun Majella Muling, Paul Bernard Muling, Lilette Monica Louise, Helen Therese Subramanian

- 22: Janet Therese (of Lisieux) Clark
- 23: Beate Teresa Hildegard Steller.
- 27: Valerie Margaret Johnson

NOVEMBER

- 09: Diane Hildegard Young
 - 14: Rose Francis De Angelis, Kathleen Catherine Daysh, Monica Augustine Hunt, Brenda Joan Williams, Robert (of Molesme) Hamilton, Felicity Benedict Giles.
 - 15: Alan Bede Hickey, Amanda Mary Hickey, Pamela Hildegard Russell, John Antony Dunne, Irene Sutherland, Helena Frances O'Neill, Joan Gertrude Dray, Heather Bede Gorman, Mary of the Annunciation Wyatt, Bill Benedict Price, Claire Catherine Devlyn, Gerardine Lioba Healy, Pamela Henry Herrick, Ira Peter Wilson, Elizabeth Frances Fahey, Rita Romanus Gertrude Schembri, Linda Hildegard Childs-Van-Wijk, Jeff Boniface Smart, Margaret Hilda Watts, Denise Frances Hill, Ken Benedict Press, Rosie Lioba Jenkins, Brian Robert Brennan, Patrick Benedict Sleight.
 - 17: Colleen Julian Hines and Victoria Rose Sultana
 - 21: Christine Gertrud Simons, Enid Cecilia Fleming, Patricia Benedict Thomas.
 - 22: Catherine Anne Cecilia Milgate, Janet Therese Clark.
 - 23: Majorie Teresa Carroll.
 - 24: Fiona Therese Harris
 - 26: Therese Julian Proctor, Arnold Boniface Struzina.
- SOLEMNITY OF CHRIST THE KING: Mary Elizabeth Locke.

SOLEMN PROFESSION ANNIVERSARIES:

OCTOBER:

- 11: Sr. Elizabeth Funder

NOVEMBER:

- 03: Sr. Magdalen Mather
- 16: Mother Mary Gertud Barnes (Abbess)

NECROLOGY:

SEPTEMBER

- 03: Sr. Mary Patricia Kelly.
- 07: Sr. Mary Chanel Pechy
- 12: Fr. Maurus O'Connell, who was chaplain for a short time from 1888, following upon the death of Fr. Bonaventure Curr. (chaplain from 1874-1888)
- 15: Oblate Patricia Mary Atkins.
- 21: Sr. Fidelis Williams
- 24: Sr. Gertrude Hishon
- 26: Sr. Marie Therese Malone
- 27: Oblate Philip Francis Bruno Price

OCTOBER

- 04: Oblate Ann Gertrud Anderson
- 08: Mother Mary Scholastica Gregory (one of two founding Mothers).
- 09: Sr. Mary Aloysius Carroll, Sr. Mary Scholastica O'Loughlin.
- 10: Sr. Dominic Fitzpatrick, Sr. Mary Magdalen Brown.
- 11: Mother Walburge Wallis (first elected Prioress - 1864).
- 11: Oblate Vivienne (Martha) Chiswell
- 13: Sr. Marie Vianney Loughnan

17: Fr. Bede Sumner. Fr. Bede lived at our monastery in the last years of his life. He freed our community from debt in 1864, and was therefore our most generous benefactor of the early decades of our history.

18: Oblate Aubrey Patrick Connors

19: Sr. Mary Joseph Dimond.

19: Sr. Placid Wilson, fifth elected Prioress.

25: Sr. Mary Lucy Kirsch

26: Sr. Mary Patrick Emblem.

NOVEMBER

09: Sr. Mary Stanislaus Dwyer.

21: Sr. Mary Francis Machlin.

23: Sr. Mary Veronica Hennessy

24: Sr. Mary Gabriel Enge

25: Sr. Mary Teresa Dimond.

SECTION SEVEN: SAINTS

St. Mechild of Hackeborn shares: “The Lover of your soul holds your hand in his” [and leads you home]. Her Feast Day is October 12th.

St. Hildegard of Bingen shares: “God is my strength. I run like a deer that seeks its spring.”

We could add that as we age, we run faster, drawn on by the great and holy memory that reminds us where we really belong.

SECTION EIGHT: FOR REFLECTION:

“Let the Oratory [Chapel/Church] be what it is called”, Benedict said. Have a place where you can go in order to be about nothing but the business of being in the presence of God so that every other place in your life can become more conscious of that presence...” (Sr. Joan Chittister, *The Rule of Benedict*). I am re-wording this in the light of the two quotations at the beginning of this booklet: *Have a place where you can go in order to breathe more deeply the great memory that is planted within your being – the memory that reminds you that you are not at home on earth, that you belong somewhere else [with the Divine Godhead], that you are slowly bringing every facet of your life into the consciousness of this great memory.*